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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Over the past 20 years, advances in scientific research have changed perceptions concerning the mental health of children and adolescents and demonstrated that the same mental disorders that afflict adults can also occur in young people; and

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WHEREAS, Scientific research has also demonstrated that early identification and treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents greatly increase the chance of a favorable prognosis; and

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WHEREAS, In January 2001, the Surgeon General of the United States noted that while one out of every ten young people in this nation suffers from mental illness that is severe enough to cause some level of impairment, only one out of five receives the mental health treatment that is needed; and

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WHEREAS, The World Health Organization has reported that neuropsychiatric disorders in young people will rise by more than 50 percent by 2020, making such disorders one of the top five causes of disability, morbidity, and mortality among children and adolescents; and

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WHEREAS, Studies concerning psychological autopsy have found that 90 percent of young people who end their own lives have depression or another diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder at the time of their deaths, verifying a link between mental illness and suicide; and

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WHEREAS, In 1999, the Surgeon General first recognized that mental illness and substance abuse disorders are, in fact, the greatest risk factors for suicidal behavior and that properly identifying and treating mental illness and substance abuse disorders are important parts of suicide prevention

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1 activities; and

2 WHEREAS, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
3 Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services
4 recently reported that in 1999 almost 3 million young people
5 were at risk for suicide, but only 36 % received mental health
6 treatment; and

7 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of
8 the Department of Health and Human Services recently reported
9 that in 2000 suicide was the third leading cause of death among
10 persons 15 to 24 years of age; and

11 WHEREAS, Studies completed by the Centers for Disease
12 Control and Prevention reveal that each year in the United
13 States, almost as many adolescents and young adults commit
14 suicide as die from leukemia, birth defects, pneumonia and
15 influenza, and AIDS combined; and

16 WHEREAS, In January 2001, the Surgeon General issued a goal
17 to "improve the assessment and recognition of mental health
18 needs in children" in part by encouraging "early identification
19 of mental health needs in existing preschool, childcare,
20 education, health, welfare, juvenile justice, and substance
21 abuse treatment systems"; and

22 WHEREAS, Several states have recognized mental illness and
23 suicide in young people as public health crises, some even
24 before the initiative of the Department of Health and Human
25 Services, and as of today, the majority of states have either
26 developed or are in the process of developing plans to identify
27 mental illness and to prevent suicide among this segment of the
28 population; and

29 WHEREAS, The efforts, initiatives, and activities of the
30 Federal and State Governments should be used to support

1 evidence-based practices for identifying mental illness in
2 children and adolescents and preventing suicide among our young
3 people; and

4 WHEREAS, A program known as the "Columbia TeenScreen
5 Program", developed at the Division of Child and Adolescent
6 Psychiatry of Columbia University, has been proven successful,
7 offers technical assistance for implementation of a screening
8 program, and provides all the components for such a program at
9 no charge at this time; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
12 recognize that mental illness and suicide among young people
13 are public health crises in this State and in this nation and
14 that all residents of Illinois should make the identification
15 of mental disorders and the prevention of suicide among the
16 young people of this State a public health priority; and be it
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That we recommend that every young person should
19 be screened once during childhood or adolescence to identify
20 mental illness and prevent suicide; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That such a screening and identification process
22 should employ sound, evidence-based tools; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That all adolescents in middle school and high
24 school should have equal access to such a screening process;
25 and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
27 Governor Rod Blagojevich, the Secretary of Human Services, the
28 State Board of Education, the Chicago Board of Education, the
29 Directors of Public Health, Central Management Services, and
30 Public Aid, the Director of the Administrative Office of the

1 Illinois Courts, and the Illinois Parent Teacher Association.